

Jerusalem Perspective

A Monthly Report on Research into the Words of Jesus

Number Eleven

August 1988

At the Feet of a Rabbi

We noted in our previous issue that nearly all first-century rabbis practiced a trade. Despite the fact that most rabbis had professions, however, they were not always able to support themselves as they traveled throughout the land.

While traveling, the first-century rabbi could not easily set up a shop due to the shortness of his stay in any given location. Nor would it have been fair when visiting smaller communities to take work away from a local resident in the same profession. Also, work could not readily be found for the large number of disciples who often accompanied a rabbi. Therefore the rabbi and his disciples were necessarily dependent upon the hospitality of the communities they visited.

A rabbi's stay in a community might last from a few days to weeks or months. Although rabbis would not accept payment for teaching Torah, most would accept lodging, and usually food as well, for themselves and their students.

Jesus clearly felt that his disciples should be entirely supported by their hosts when out teaching. In one instance, he sent out disciples commanding them to take nothing with them, neither food nor money. "The laborer," he said, "deserves his wages" (Luke 10:7).

Meeting Places

For the long-term disciple, learning from a rabbi meant considerable traveling. One literally had to follow a rabbi to learn from him. There is a rabbinic saying

which supports this picture of the rabbi in the land of Israel:

Yose ben Yoezer said, "Let your home be a meeting place for the sages, and cover yourself with the dust of their feet, and drink in their words thirstily." (Avot 1:4)

Yose ben Yoezer, living in the first half of the second century B.C., was one of the earliest of the sages of the Mishnah. In the context of his statement, "a meeting place for the sages" should be understood to

mean a place where the sages could hold classes, not a place where the sages themselves could assemble. Had disciples not opened their homes to the rabbis, it would have been impossible for them to reach the people with their message.

The story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 offers a good example of a family who heeded Yose ben Yoezer's injunction to be hospitable to rabbis and their disciples. Not only did they make their home available as a meeting place for the rabbi Jesus, but Mary is described as "sitting at the feet" of the rabbi — "drinking in his words thirstily," as ben Yoezer expressed it.

Covered in Dust

Note the continuation of Yose ben Yoezer's statement: "...and

(continued on page 2)

תקדש שמך

Hallowed Be Thy Name

by Bradford Young

This is more than a mere formula of praise. How can the name of God be "hallowed"?

Actually, the sense of the word might better be expressed in English by "sanctify." The whole phrase could be translated, "May your name be sanctified."

Sanctity of God

The sanctity of God is a well-known biblical theme (e.g., Isaiah 6:3) and seems to be related to God's justice. Compare Ezekiel 38:23: "I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself

known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

תקדש (yit-ka-DESH, "be hallowed" or "be sanctified"), the Hebrew word Jesus probably used in the prayer he taught his disciples, is parallel to ותקדשתי (ve-hit-ka-dish-TI, "So I will show...my holiness.") in Ezekiel 38:23. This verse from Ezekiel formed the basis for a number of ancient Jewish prayers. One of these is that of Rabbi Ezekiel which appears in Ta'anit

(continued on page 2)

At the Feet of a Rabbi

(continued from page 1)

cover yourself with the dust of their feet." A number of translators of the Mishnah have rendered this, "...and sit amidst the dust of their feet." However Prof. Shmuel Safrai has suggested a different interpretation, upon which our translation above is based.

To this day the unpaved roads of Israel are covered with a fine dust. As a result, when people walk along these roads they invariably raise a considerable cloud of dust. Any group of disciples following a rabbi would be covered with dust at the end of a journey, and if one wanted to travel with a rabbi one literally had to cover oneself with the dust of his feet.

Incidentally, it was the dusty roads of Israel which gave rise to the practice of footwashing as a sign of hospitality to visitors and as a means of practical hygiene in the home (cf. Luke 7:44).

Raising Disciples

"Make many disciples" is one of the three earliest sayings recorded in the Mishnah (Avot 1:1), and a rabbi often would select and train large numbers of disciples. The apostle Paul's teacher Gamaliel, for instance, had 1000 disciples who studied with him (Sotah 49b).

Although Jesus had only twelve permanent students, there must have been many others who learned from him for shorter peri-

ods of time. Luke 19:37 notes that near the end of Jesus' life, a "multitude" of his disciples accompanied him as he entered Jerusalem. One can gain an idea of the size of that "multitude" from the number of Galilean disciples — 120 — who remained in Jerusalem after Jesus' crucifixion (Acts 1:15).

Jesus' twelve disciples were his inner circle who spent years of intense study and practical training with their master. Later, they themselves were sent out to make disciples and pass on Jesus' teachings.

Hallowed Be Thy Name

(continued from page 1)

64b in the Jerusalem Talmud. When the much-needed rains came, he would bless the LORD: "May your name be magnified, sanctified and exalted, our King, for every drop that you send us."

The words in bold above also occur in the Lord's Prayer ("king" is related to "kingdom"). Rabbi Ezekiel's prayer helps us better understand the meaning of "hallowed be": "Grant that all the world may recognize and sanctify your name."

Sanctify the Name

What did this expression mean to Jesus' Jewish listeners nearly two thousand years ago? The exact meaning of the word "sanctify" was difficult to define in concrete terms, and so it was sometimes clarified by its antonym — "profane." In fact, this contrast already appeared in Ezekiel: "I will sanctify my great name which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have caused to be profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD...when I am sanctified through you in their sight" (Ezekiel 36:23).

The name of the LORD can either be sanctified or profaned by one's conduct. Because a martyr frequently caused others to glorify God as a result of his sacrifice, the Hebrew idiom "to sanctify the Name" often was understood as referring to someone who gave his life for his faith.

Rabbinic Midrash

Early Jewish commentaries provide insight into how biblical passages were interpreted during the New Testament era. It is illuminating to read the *midrash* (commentary) on the verse, "Do not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel" (Leviticus 22:32).

Israel's sages interpreted this verse to mean that one must be willing to die for one's faith:

One should take "Do not profane," to mean "Sanctify." And when He says, "that I may be sanctified," He means "Sacrifice your life as a martyr and sanctify my name." (Sifra on Leviticus 22:32; 99d)

The focus of this passage is on those who suffer martyrdom for their righteous way of life, and thereby sanctify God's name by their example.

In addition, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2) was interpreted:

You shall be separated.... If you will sanctify yourselves, then I will consider your [sanctification] as if you had sanctified Me. (Sifra on Leviticus 19:2; 86c)

In line with this, Rabbi Shimon ben Eleazar taught:

When Israel does the will of the Omnipresent, then His name is magnified in the world. (Mekilta Beshallah Shirata 3; to Exodus 15:2)

This is a powerful concept: one sanctifies God by living a holy life. Perhaps the full force of this expression in the Lord's Prayer is most accurately expressed by Jesus' words: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16).

Dr. Young is a founding member of the Jerusalem School. This article is condensed from his book The Jewish Background to the Lord's Prayer, published by the Center for Judaic-Christian Studies (\$4.95 ppd.), P.O. Box 202707, Austin, Texas 78720 U.S.A.

Jerusalem Perspective

Editor
Jeffrey Magnuson

JERUSALEM PERSPECTIVE is an independent report published monthly by David Bivin, director of the Jerusalem School for the Study of the Synoptic Gospels. Unsigned articles are attributable to the publisher. Subscription prices (including airmail postage): one year, US\$36; two years, US\$60; three years, US\$75. Gift subscriptions: US\$30 for first, US\$25 for each additional. Back issues are available at US\$3 per issue. Copyright, 1988, by David Bivin. Printed in Israel. ISSN 0792-1357

P.O. Box 19733
Jerusalem, 91197 Israel

The first letter of the final syllable of הללויה *yod* (י). You will recall that the *yod* represents the Hebrew “y” sound. We introduced it in Lesson One as the first letter in the word *ישוע* (*ye-SHU-a*).

Under the *yod* of הללויה is the vowel symbol *ka-MATS*, which is pronounced as the “a” in “father.” It was first introduced in Lesson Eight under the second letter of the word *אבא* (*a-BA*). In English, “a” can have many different pronunciations. Hebrew, however, has only one “a” sound.

ma-PIK

“H” is difficult for English speakers to pronounce, especially when they speak rapidly and their pronunciation is slurred. Consequently, over the centuries the “h” sound has dropped out of the pronunciation of many English words still spelled with an “h” such as hour, honor, heir and rhyme.

The speakers of the English Cockney dialect are renowned for dropping their “haitches.” Perhaps the best-known example of this is found in the musical “My Fair Lady,” in which the unlettered Eliza Doolittle calls her mentor ‘enry ‘iggins.

The final letter in הללויה, like the first letter, is *he* (ה). Similar to the English “h,” *he* is a weak letter — so weak that it has dropped out of many Hebrew words.

The *he* is even more difficult to pronounce at the end of a word. Like the English “h,” it normally is silent in that position (compare cheetah, shah, hurrah). We would expect the *he* at the end of הללויה to be silent. However, a dot appears in the middle of the final *he* of הללויה when it is pointed. This dot is called *ma-PIK*.

The *ma-PIK* is a dot in a *he* (ה).

Hebrew Nuggets

which appears at the end of a word. The *ma-PIK* signifies that the *he* is not silent but is to be pronounced. However a *he* sound at the end of a word is so difficult to pronounce that in practice, in

Lesson Eleven ma-PIK

In the last lesson we learned the new elements in the second and third syllables of the word הללויה (ha-le-lu-YAH) — the letter LA-med and the vowel sign she-VA. ha-le-lu-YAH has one thing more to teach us: the ma-PIK. This indicates the vocalization of the he in the final syllable of ha-le-lu-YAH.

everyday speech in Israel today, the *he* with a *ma-PIK* is ignored.

In our transliterations, there is no indication of the *ma-PIK* since the *he* is transliterated “h” whether it is vocal or silent.

Divine Name

If we pronounce only the sounds of the final syllable of הללויה, the *yod*, *ka-MATS* and *he*, we get *yah* (יָה). As mentioned in Lesson Nine, *יה* is a shortened form of one of God’s names, apparently the first syllable of יהוה (YHVH), the unutterable tetragrammaton. *יה* appears in Scripture twenty-four times as a separate word, for example in the following passage:

Moses built an altar and named it YHVH is my Banner. He said, “It means, ‘Hand on the throne of Yah!’ YHVH will be at war with Amalek forever.” (Exodus 17:15-16)

In Other Words

With the *ma-PIK* and the other new symbols found in *ha-le-lu-YAH*, you have the tools to read many other words. The words listed below are presented as examples which you now have the

ability to read. They are included only to provide practice in reading letter and vowel symbols.

• בָּלַע (*ba-LA*), “he swallowed.”

Remember that the T-like vowel symbol under the *bet* is a *ka-MATS*, and that the straight line under the *LA-med* is a *pa-TAH*, both of which

vowels are pronounced as the

“a” in father. Also remember that the *bet* has a dot in its middle when it is pointed. Without the dot it is a *vet*, as in the following word:

• לָלַב (*lu-LAV*), a shoot of the palm tree.

It is a word that surfaced in rabbinic times. *lu-LAV* is one of the “four species” waved as part of the Sukkot ceremonies.

Following the initial *LA-med* is the *shu-RUK* (וּ), the “u” sound as in the word “flu,” a vowel symbol we first learned in the word *ישוע* (*ye-SHU-a*). Under the second *LA-med* we again see the *ka-MATS*.

• הָיָה (*ha-YAH*), “he was” or “it was.” Like הללויה, *היה* has a *he* at both ends of the word. The first is vocal, the second is silent. Both vowels of *ha-YAH* are *ka-MATS*.

• שָׂעָה (*sha-AH*), “hour.”

sha-AH is a post-biblical Hebrew word. Just as the English word “hour” contains a silent “h,” so by chance its Hebrew equivalent has a silent *he*. Remember that *ש* stands for the “sh” sound when there is a dot at its upper right-hand corner.

• לָהּ (*lah*), “to her,” also has a final *he* with a *ma-PIK*.

In Lesson Twelve we will learn additional Hebrew sounds with the help of me-no-RAH, the word for lampstand.

Research
by Robert
L. Lindsey,

doyen of the Jerusalem School, has helped clarify our understanding of the process by which the material in the synoptic Gospels was preserved and transmitted. A brief outline of Lindsey's conjectured process of Gospel transmission is presented in the box at the right.

Orderly Account

Luke desired, he said in his prologue, to present to Theophilus an "orderly" account. Such ordering is to be noted in Matthew and Mark as well. This attempted ordering may explain why so many of the Gospel stories appear in a different chronological order from Gospel to Gospel.

Matthew, for example, placed Jesus' teaching on anxiety (6:25-34) after his words about serving two masters, whereas Luke (12:22-31) placed the teaching on anxiety after the parable of the rich fool, even though Luke also preserved Jesus' words about serving two masters (16:13).

A Longer Story

After telling the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin (Luke 15:4-10), Jesus added the comment: "I say to you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). From such a statement one might conclude that God is partial to sinners.

However, there is reason to believe that these two parables are

Discovering Longer Gospel Stories

A Conjectured Process of Gospel Transmission

1. **Hebrew Life of Jesus (36-37 A.D.)** Jesus' words were recorded in Hebrew within five years of his death. This was a straightforward Hebrew story, about 30-35 chapters long, similar to the simple biographies of Elijah and Elisha in the Bible.
2. **Greek Life of Jesus (41-42 A.D.)** Within the next five years, Greek-speaking churches outside the land of Israel demanded a Greek translation of this biography. As was typical of the period, this translation was slavishly literal. Also, Greek being a less concise language than Hebrew, the translation was 10-12 chapters longer than the original.
3. **Reorganized Scroll (43-44 A.D.)** Before the Greek Life of Jesus was widely circulated, its various stories were arranged topically. Thus parts of the Greek translation were divorced from their original contexts and the original story outline was lost. Even stories were sometimes divided and the fragments moved to different contexts.
4. **First Recreated Story (55-56 A.D.)** Shortly before Luke wrote his account, a Greek author attempted to reconstruct a chronological Gospel based upon the fragments of the Reorganized Scroll. This resulted in a much shorter version of Jesus' biography (about 18 chapters), as well as a significant improvement in its quality of Greek. Only Luke of the synoptists seems to have known the First Recreated Story.
5. **Gospel of Luke (58-60 A.D.)** Luke used both the Reorganized Scroll and the First Recreated Story in writing his Gospel. As specifically stated in his prologue, Luke desired to present an "orderly account" of Jesus' life, and took his cue for much of his story outline (chapters 3-9 and 18-24) from the First Recreated Story.
6. **Gospel of Mark (65-66 A.D.)** Mark, who apparently had access to the Reorganized Scroll, basically rewrote Luke's Gospel. The First Recreated Story seems to have been completely unknown to Mark. Lindsey has shown that Mark took phrases from Acts, Romans, I & II Corinthians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians, and James as well as Luke; therefore Mark's Gospel must antedate these books.
7. **Gospel of Matthew (68-69 A.D.)** Matthew used both Mark's Gospel and the Reorganized Scroll, trying to be faithful to both when the two sources differed. He did not know the First Recreated Story nor the Gospel of Luke.

part of a longer story, portions of which now are found in two different places in the Gospels. According to Dr. Robert Lindsey, these parables originally were preceded by the story of the feast given in Jesus' honor by Levi, the repentant tax collector (Luke 5:27-32).

Some of the other guests at that dinner complained to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat with

tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus replied to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." In this context, the "well" or "righteous" are the self-righteous who think that they are well and have no need of a physician.

Repentance

Lindsey claims that the story of Levi's banquet which mentions "sinners" and "the righteous" is the context for the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin. If so, then Jesus spoke of the "ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" in the same ironic fashion with which he mentioned the "well who have no need of a physician." God is not more concerned for one sinner than for ninety-nine truly righteous persons. He is, however, more interested in one person who is conscious of his spiritual state than in ninety-nine people who feel they have no need of God.

Luke appears to have understood that these two parables demanded such a context, for he

wrote an introduction to them (Luke 15:1-3) which make the parables a response to the accusation, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." The introduction even seems to be based on Luke 5:29-30, from the account of Levi's feast. The "well" needed a physician and the "righteous" needed repentance, but they refused to acknowledge it.